

April 19, 2007

The Honorable Larry Gossett  
Chair, King County Council  
Room 1200  
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Gossett:

For more than nine months, the Department of Executive Services (DES) has gone to great lengths to fill the Records, Elections and Licensing Services Division Director position. In December 2006, DES hired Waldron and Company, an executive search firm, to launch an aggressive national search to fill the Records, Elections and Licensing Services (REALS) Division Director position. This national search yielded twelve qualified applicants, occasioned numerous screenings and interviews, and, ultimately pointed us to the most qualified, elections professional available. In our search of similarly sized jurisdictions as King County, the best qualified and candidate most suited for the REALS director position is former, two-term Kitsap County auditor and current Assistant Director of REALS, Ms. Sherril Huff.

Ms. Huff was hired as the Assistant Director of REALS in February 2005 following the historically close gubernatorial election of 2004 to provide seasoned leadership in implementing numerous process improvements and management reforms. During her tenure in this position she has demonstrated consistent professionalism and leadership for an organization experiencing significant change. As the liaison to four external reviews of the organization, Sherril has overseen the implementation of recommendations which have helped rebuild public trust and confidence in King County Elections both internally and with key stakeholders including the Citizens' Election Oversight Committee, Secretary of State, and the King County Republican and Democratic political parties. Her contributions have provided positive cultural, organizational and procedural changes within the division since 2005.

Having served two terms as Kitsap County Auditor (1979 – 1986), Sherril has a unique and thorough understanding of elections laws. In addition to her responsibilities as the county's chief elections officer, she oversaw licensing, archives and recording responsibilities and services. With more than 28 years of public-sector service, Sherril possesses a vast knowledge of state and local government agencies. Prior to joining King County Elections in 2005, Sherril served as Deputy Mayor for the city of Bremerton where she is credited for establishing a foundation and team in the expansive waterfront revitalization project. During her public service career, Sherril also served as Executive Director of the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council, Assistant Director of the Washington State Lottery, and was elected as a Bremerton City Council Representative.

As King County transitions to all mail voting and other critical projects in each section of the division, it is critical we have a leader in place who is intimately familiar with our organization, Washington State election law, and someone with the experience and qualifications to run a large organization during transition.

Ms. Huff's appointment allows the REALS Division to continue its forward movement. Finding an equally qualified Superintendent of Elections to join the REALS Division's leadership team is the next step. We have a pool of candidates and have made progress in selecting those best qualified for the position, but have not made a final selection. I look forward to sending you my recommendation for the Superintendent of Elections position in the near future.

Last year I committed to a nationwide search to find the best, most capable professional to move King County REALS forward. That search has been completed and I am proud to recommend Sherril Huff. I look forward to the council's adoption of the enclosed motion approving her appointment.

Sincerely,

Ron Sims  
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers  
    ATTN: Ross Baker, Chief of Staff  
          Shelley Sutton, Policy Staff Director  
          Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council  
Sheryl V. Whitney, Assistant County Executive, King County Executive Office  
Bob Cowan, Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Paul Tanaka, County Administrative Officer, Department of Executive Services (DES)  
James Buck, Interim Director, Records, Elections and Licensing Services, DES